

A 'Nixie' isn't a pixie — it's a postal person whose role is to make a fixie

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CONNECTIONS



DENNIS
LYTHGOE

Have you ever received a letter stamped: "Nixie Section, Post Office"? I asked myself, "What's a Nixie Section"? I couldn't answer it, and no one else could either, so I called the Nixie Section and asked them. They said it comes from the slang term "nix," which means to reject. In fact, since 1885, mail that was not deliverable for whatever reason has been nicknamed a nixie. So the Nixie Section handles all pieces

of mail that cannot readily be delivered for some reason — no ZIP code, no stamp, illegible or incorrect address, damaged, etc.

For many years the people who worked in this section of the Post Office were called "Nixie clerks," but their designation has been modernized. They are now called "special review clerks."

That's definitely a title that should be nixed.

● **SO WHEN IS THE LAST TIME** you remember voting on which picture should be displayed on a stamp devoted to a famous person? Elvis is apparently more important than any American president. I personally prefer the younger version — which seems more idealistic and carefree — before the corruption of money and fame set in.

Only thing is, if he's really not dead, we've established a stamp under a dangerous precedent, and then every Tom, Dick or Harry will want his own stamp. And if he's really not dead, could he be conducting a dangerous conspiracy to get his own stamp?

● **IT'S INTERESTING** how many candidates for political office either have the same name or a variation of it. Democrats and Republicans are going to be even more confused this year than ever.

Ted Stewart, a Republican, is running for the U.S. Senate. Stewart Hanson, a Democrat, is running for governor. Jim Hansen, a Republican, is

running for re-election to the House. Mike Stewart, a Republican, is running for governor. Mike Leavitt, another Republican, is also running for governor.

The problem is that some people are sending money to the wrong Mike, Stewart, or Hanson, and they will be very surprised on election day. That is, if they ever figure out they made a mistake.

● **A NEW REPORT SAYS** that boys are favored over girls by their teachers in school, thus supporting our standard ideas about sex discrimination. But my 6th grade son, a seasoned analyst, says he is convinced that it is just the reverse.

● **ISN'T IT GREAT** to have the legislature adjourned and realize we don't have to read about bills to ban candy cigarettes or to require swine food to be boiled before serving it to beasts? Also, we don't have to listen to any more angry exchanges between the Governor and Rep. Frank Pignatelli, D-Salt Lake.

● **THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN** is getting down and dirty as primaries continue across the country. My favorite was a Republican exchange between Vice President Dan Quayle and Pat Buchanan. Quayle accused Buchanan of "embracing the foreign policy of George McGovern, the Mideast policy of Jesse Jackson, and the protectionist policy of Dick Gephardt."

All three are Democrats. When Buchanan heard about it he refused to respond. He said, "I don't want to be charged with child abuse."

And Bill Clinton was severely attacked by his Democratic opponents because he lost his temper on an open microphone when he heard incorrectly that Jesse Jackson was endorsing Tom Harkin. He said it was an "outrage," and "a dirty, double-crossing, back-stabbing thing to do."

But he didn't use a single obscenity. Those who remember President Bush's open microphone attack on Dan Rather in 1988 will appreciate that.

■ *Dennis Lythgoe's column is published on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.*

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